

CHAPTER ONE

YOUR HOUSE IS WAITING

Hermione walked slowly up the wooden staircase, her heels knocking loudly against the old flooring. Her purse jingled as it swung back and forth with her walking but stopped when she felt a sickness flush over her and she paused on the stairs for a moment, taking in her surroundings.

The store was always an amusing and uplifting place. The shelves were lined with colorful products covered by shadows, the ceiling lined with hanging knick knacks and toys, and yet, somehow the room seemed cold and sad. Hermione stared into the darkness from the top of the stairs, feeling as though she'd never see a happy soul in it again. That couldn't be true though. People would move on and visit with smiles on their faces eventually. All it would take is time.

Everything was how it always was in the joke shop but it still felt empty to Hermione. She let out a long breath, relieving the tension in her chest and walked up the final few stairs to the front door of the loft. Hermione opened the unlocked door and walked in cautiously, unsure of what to expect. She closed the door quietly behind her and turned around to face the inside of George and Fred's loft.

It was completely silent except for the faint sound of crying.

Hermione swallowed hard and walked farther into the desolate room. The furniture remained where it always was; there were dirty dishes in the sink and the refrigerator was humming quietly but it was not the home Hermione remembered. She ran her fingers against the soft velvet of the sofa and continued through the room.

As she walked slowly and calmly through the common room, she longed to see it occupied by two red-haired boys. She

Comment [KFB1]: Ugh, writing this chapter killed me. I seem to have an unnerving knack for writing very depressing things... good or bad?

wanted to see a pair of long, lanky legs hanging off the edge of the recliner and a head covered with ginger locks poking out from behind the refrigerator door. She wanted to see them, together again.

Hermione gazed at the room one last time before following the soft cries to a door on the left side of the room. She pulled up the falling strap of her black dress and pushed her bangs behind her ear before standing in front of the door, listening to the muffled sound of sobs escaping from the bedroom.

She pressed her ear against the door and shook the doorknob to find it locked. Hermione listened closely through the cold wood and heard the quiet crying louder than before. She felt her heart breaking and let the tears escape her eyes. She took a deep breath and pulled out her wand from her purse. She pointed the thin wood at the shining doorknob and let herself in.

“Alohamora,” she whispered and the door clicked loudly as it unlocked.

Hermione placed her wand and purse on the ground before pushing open the door and making her way in. She stood in the doorway and stared into the room; a single bed that belonged to George was a mess of pillows and blankets sat in the corner next to a large dresser, his personal belongings adorned across the top of it. A trash bin, un-emptied, was placed next to the door under a small picture frame with a dollar in it. A recliner was situated awkwardly in the left-most corner of the square room. Hermione scanned over the room until a figure caught her eye.

The moonlight through the window made only his silhouette visible. He was sitting on the ground, his elbows on his knees. His body trembled with his cries and Hermione felt her chest tighten and her throat run dry. It was seeing him, the love of her life, in so much pain for the past several weeks that made her realize things fully. She had not yet succumbed to her feelings until that moment, when his absence hit her. Hermione swallowed hard and kept quiet as his sobs grew softer and he

Comment [KFB2]: I have the entire Weasley loft mapped out in my head but I never know how to explain it

picked his head up from out of his hands. He turned his head and watched her as she walked up next to him and held out her hand.

He took it weakly and she helped him to his feet.

Immediately, he crumpled over himself and buried his face into her brown hair, his loud cries echoing throughout the small room. She wrapped her arms closely around him as he gripped onto her tightly.

Comment [KFB3]: The poor boy. :(

Hermione lifted her head to kiss him gently on the cheek and she felt his tears against her lips. He sniffled and took deep breaths. Hermione felt her own tears streaking down her face as he looked her in the eyes, his face distraught and miserable.

"I'm here," she told him softly, pressing her lips against his neck and pecking it lightly. "I'm here through everything."

With her words, he broke down again. Hermione rested her head on his chest and held him closely while he cried and she felt the tears continue to slip from her eyes.

"Will you stay with me tonight?" he asked her in a shaky voice. He coughed and sniffled again. He wiped the tears from his eyes and looked at her hopefully.

"Anything for you," Hermione told him. And she meant it.

She stared at his pale, smooth skin that seemed flawless in the moon's glow. His dark eyes were moist and swollen from crying but he still seemed so perfect to her.

Comment [KFB4]: This is what my boyfriend always says to me and it is always the best thing for him to say

They were silent for a long time, only his weeping interrupting the silence. Hermione watched him as he stared out the window at something unreachable.

"I just want him here," he muttered after a long time. He began to sob again, unable to stop for a long time. "This place isn't home without him."

"I know," Hermione whispered, feeling the same emptiness she experienced while passing through the joke shop. He choked on his cries and buried his head in her hair again. Hermione didn't know what to say to him so she simply held him and kissed his shoulder lightly, letting herself cry with him.

"I love you," she told him.

“I love you too,” he replied in a soft voice.

“Everything is going to be okay,” she said. “You just need to stay strong.”

He was silent for a moment before he spoke up in a weak voice.

“How can I be strong when the reason I ever had strength to begin with is gone?”

He pulled away from her and began to pace around the room, tears cascading down his face.

“How can I go on without half of who I am?” he asked through clenched teeth. “How can I be myself when the better part of me is gone forever?”

He was beginning to grow hysterical and Hermione didn’t know what she could do. She watched in fear and sadness as he paced frantically, pulling at his strawberry hair, sobbing between his sentences.

“How can I ever be happy after what I saw today?” he yelled. “I watched Georgie get lowered into the ground. Nothing can erase that from my mind, Hermione!”

Fred’s crying grew more desperate and needy as he collapsed to the ground, tearing a hole in his black dress pants.

Hermione knew that words would do nothing for Fred. She walked over to him and sat down next to him and wrapped her fingers in his. She laid her head on his shoulders and he rested his on hers. He sniffed and took long breaths as he began to regain control. Hermione held his hand tight and felt his body next to hers.

“He may have left the rest of us, Fred,” Hermione told him, her voice low and quiet. “But he will always be with you. He is a part of you and he will always be there to give you strength.

Always.”

Fred let out a deep breath and kissed Hermione on the forehead before resting his head on hers again and staring blankly out the window. Hermione felt the concern building

Comment [KFB5]: This next part was seriously hard for me to write. I wanted to get it perfect and wanted to say exactly everything right. I think it turned out pretty good

Comment [KFB6]: Oh yeah. That’s right. This is a Post-War FRED fanfiction. Sorry George. I’ve been dying to write this.
P.S. When he says ‘Georgie’, I die a little

Comment [KFB7]: </3 Every Harry Potter has to love this word

inside of her as she saw an emptiness in his gaze that she'd never seen before.